

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SAJ-01 CIAE-00

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R 121400Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9201

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 7749

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, IN

SUBJ: DEATH OF THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR

1. THE INDIAN AMBASSADOR TO THE SOVIET UNION D.P. DHAR DIED IN NEW DELHI JUNE 13 WHILE UNDERGOING TREATMENT FOR A HEART AILMENT WHICH FORCED HIS HOSPITALIZATION HERE JUNE 1. DHAR HAD RETURNED TO DELHI FROM MOSCOW IN MID-MAY FOR CONSULTATIONS AND PARTICIPATION IN THE FIRST SESSION OF THE INDO-SOVIET TRADE AGREEMENT TALKS WHICH WOUND UP JUNE 4. IN A BRIEF STATEMENT PRIME MINISTER GANDHI DESCRIBED HERSELF AS STUNNED BY HER LONG TIME CLOSE ASSOCIATE'S DEATH.

2. D.P. DHAR ONLY EMBARKED ON HIS ASSIGNMENT IN FEBRUARY. HOWEVER HE HAD SERVED AS AMBASSADOR IN MOSCOW FROM 1969 TO 1971, WHEN HE WAS MUCH INVOLVED IN THE GENESIS AND PREPARATION OF THE AUGUST 9, 1971 INDO-SOVIET FRIENDSHIP AND COOPERATION TREATY WHICH CURRENTLY UNDERPINS THE TWO COUNTRIES' CLOSE RELATIONSHIP. DHAR SUBSEQUENTLY BECAME PLANNING MINISTER BUT SOON SUFFERED A DECLINE IN POLITICAL FORTUNE AS A RESULT OF ECONOMIC POLICY FAILURES IN 1972-1973 (NEW DELHI 2125). WHILE DHAR RETAINED A GOOD PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MRS. GANDHI, HER POSTING OF HIM TO MOSCOW WAS SEEN BY MANY HERE AS AN EFFORT TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN DHAR AND DAY-TO-DAY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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GOI POLICY MAKING.

3. COMMENT--DHAR'S BRIEF SECOND TOUR AS AMBASSADOR PRODUCED NO NOTABLE ADVANCES IN INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. HE WAS UNABLE TO PROMOTE AN EARLY RETURN VISIT BY MRS. GANDHI TO THE USSR DESPITE A RENEWAL OF THE LONGSTANDING SOVIET INVITATION (NEW DALHI 6978). ALTHOUGH WE HAVE HEARD THAT DHAR WAS EXPLORING AVENUES OF COOPERATION WITH CEMA, NOTHING CONCRETE HAS APPARENTLY YET EMERGED. MRS. GANDHI MUST NOW FIND A REPLACEMENT OF COMPARABLE PROMINENCE WHO SHARES HER OUTLOOK TO WRESTLE WITH THE PERSISTING ECONOMIC ISSUES IN INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS. WHILE INDO-SOVIET RELATIONS REMAIN GOOD, THEY ARE NOT SO INSTITUTIONALIZED TO STAND AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF NEGLECT.

SCHNEIDER

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